

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
Archives and Records Center
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 20, 2022

PRESENT: (in person)

Carol Black
Christopher Brownlowe
Donna DeBlasio
Shawn Eyer
Martha Harris
Michael Hobbs
Sam Hoffman
Richard Klingenmaier
Deborah Osborne
Martha Raymond
Danny Smith
Steve Stuart
Tom Soule
Catherine Weinraub
Ivy Whitlatch

EXCUSED:

Mark Farkus
Sean Ferguson
Laura Lieberman
Linda Lovell

ABSENT:

Lisa Schumaier

GUEST for Tour Only: Gail Rothrock (term expired, seeking reappointment)

GUEST for Meeting: Ralph Booker, Jeannie Perron, Constance Cantrell, Sandy Sanor

CITY STAFF:

Gretchen Bulova, OHA

Visit of HARC Members to the Archives and Records Center: 6 to 7 p.m. to tour the site.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Danny Smith at 7:05 p.m. at the Archives and Records Center

Approval of Minutes for July 19, 2022:

Edit to the minutes suggested by Steve Stuart, noting Sam Hoffman and Laura Lieberman should receive excused absences. On a motion by Steve Stuart and seconded by Tom Soule, HARC voted to approve the revised July 19, 2022 minutes.

Chairs Update:

The chair acknowledged the service of Rosemarie Esber, who stepped down at the expiration of her term. The chair welcomed Donna DeBlasio as the new Planning District I representative and asked her to introduce herself. Ms. DeBlasio shared her past work experience with museums and historic preservation.

All City Commissions are requested to adopt an electronic meeting and participation policy. HARC voted to accept the policy. Motion to adopt the policy was made by Carol Black and seconded by Christopher Brownlowe.

Commissioner Updates:

Carol Black – Old Presbyterian Meeting House

- Cemetery is on the TWIG house tour September, 24th, with a historian interpreting the burials.
- Proposal to remove 4 front row pews and make other interior alterations is being considered by the church leadership. Pews original to 1837 church, pulpit is 80 years old. Members are lobbying to prevent the work.

Chris Brownlowe – Athenaeum/Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association

- Completed courtyard restoration project.
- Now working to prevent ivy on masonry.
- Last week, hosted British Officer's Association "Condolences Book" to honor the death of the Queen.

Donna DeBlasio – Planning District 1 (no updates at this time)

Shawn Eyer – George Washington Masonic National Memorial

- Two large events being planned:
 - Scottish Mason's Conference in November, \$100 conference and \$100 dinner
 - February 2023 Centennial of cornerstone laying event, registration free with additional ticketed events

Mark Farkus – Planning District 2 (excused absence)

Sean Ferguson – Public Records Advisory Commission (excused absence)

Martha Harris – Volunteer at Historic Property

- Carlyle House, need for more docents and training is available.
- Staff is preparing for the October “mourning and grieving practices” exhibit at Carlyle House.
- Chairman Smith asked about the date for the 2023 April Braddock Event.
- September 24 at 10 a.m., offering a walk that interprets James Greene (Cabinetmaker)

Michael Hobbs – Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)

- September “Social” this Sunday, September 25th at The Lyceum at 6:30 p.m.
- Theoldtowncivicassociation.org

Sam Hoffman – Planning District 1 (no updates at this time)

Richard Klingenmaier – Alexandria Association (no updates at this time)

- Celebrating 90th anniversary this year
- Will continue their annual decorative arts/history lecture with the first of 7 lectures on October 17.
- On April 17, Al Cox and Hank Handler will be talking about the restoration of the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House.

Laura Lieberman – Lee-Fendall House (excused absence)

Linda Lovell – Mortar & Pestle Society (excused absence)

Deborah Osborne – Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

- Revising easement inspection plan, adding a glossary and tailoring the inspection to the specific property
- As of October, will have a full commission.
- 323 S. Lee Street curb cut discussion at the meeting.
- Working to publish more articles about the commission and easements with funds held in State fund.

Martha Raymond – Planning District 2

- Del Ray Citizens Association is restarting meetings after a summer break, 2nd Wednesday of each month

- Art on the Avenue Oct 1, 10 to 6 along Mount Vernon Avenue

Gail Rothrock – Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF) (appointment pending)

Lisa Schumaier – Torpedo Factory Artists (absent)

Tom Soule – Planning District 3 (no updates at this time)

Steven Stuart – Planning District 3 (no updates at this time)

Catherine Weinraub – Alexandria Historical Society

- Fall lecture series:
 - Steve Hammond, descendant of enslaved at Mount Vernon and Arlington House, will be speaking Wednesday, September 26 at 7 p.m.
 - Scott Vierick, AHS member, will talk about the role of consulting historians in preservation projects on October 26.

Ivy Whitlatch – Alexandria Archaeological Commission

- Saturday, October 1 – “SeeWorthy” event to celebrate Archaeology Month and the ponding of the three historic ships.
- As of October, all AAC positions will be filled.
- Tuesday, October 11 – Ben Brenman Awards will be presented at the City Council Meeting. A reception will be held at the Lloyd House after the presentation.

Danny Smith – Business Representative

- The annual TWIG Historic Alexandria Homes Tour taking place this Saturday, September 24th.
 - 401 S. Lee will be on tour, the home of Danny and Nancy Smith.
 - Tickets can be purchased at thetwig.org.

New Business: (by-pass for this meeting)

Old Business:

New building height limits proposal (Danny Smith) – Chair posed a question to the Commission about status of this project. Commission members discussed public comment at the previous Planning Commission meeting and plans moving forward.

Curb Cut at 322-324 South Lee (Danny Smith) – A written statement had already been submitted. Linda Lovell attended the last meeting to offer an oral statement. The Board of Zoning Appeals vote was 4 to 2 in favor of the applicant.

Torpedo Factory Information Letter to the BAR Chair (Danny Smith) – Chair provided overview of HARC’s groundwork to move the Preliminary Information File forward for the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Martha Raymond commended the Chair on the letter and its impact to date. New City Manager taking an interest in historic issues, attended the kickoff of the TFAC Stakeholder meeting and said he plans to attend future meetings.

Standing Committee Reports (continued):

Alexandria Community Remembrance Project – Mark Farkus (excused absence)

Advocacy – Martha Harris and Martha Raymond, Co-Chairs

- Notes from the July and August meeting provided to all Commissioners
- Numerous issues right now, many with meetings on the same night.
- Martha Raymond encouraged Commissioners to attend the monthly Advocacy Meetings, time permitting.

OHA Support – Steve Stuart

- Organizing the Nominating Committee, please submit interest to him in serving in a leadership position.

Open Space – Martha Harris

- The Open Space Committee is working on definitions of open space and ways to assess progress in achieving goals.
- The current goal of 7.3 acres per thousand people will be supplemented with metrics that highlight equity, accessibility and other factors that highlight not only the extent of open space but also its quality and the extent which it addresses such goals.

Torpedo Factory Stakeholder Group – Martha Raymond

- Ivy Whitlach as well as Lisa Schumaier were also in attendance.
- 20 of 21 task force members present, with many being artists.
- City Staff included Qiaojue Hu and Matthew Landes from the Department of Project Implementation with representatives from the consultant Smith Group (Rhae Parks as lead)
- City Manager Jim Parajon gave us three goals:
 - Help him understand what physical improvements are needed.
 - How do we create a higher level of visibility?
 - What is the best way to govern or operate the facility?
- There was interest in the room about the history of the building and its use.
- There will be five meetings in total. The next meeting will be October 26, 6 to 8 p.m. in the City Hall Sister City Room.
- The stakeholder meeting is open to the public.

- Ivy Whitlach added comments, including that the stakeholders will not produce a report. All input is to Smith Group. First meeting (limited to 2 hours) focused on building facilities and maintenance.
- Discussion included the process of the National Register Nomination, role of the Taskforce, and opportunity to express HARC's opinion.

HARC Composition Committee – Richard Klingenmaier

- Recommend voting on individual items and not the whole package at once.
- Suggestion was made to have a special meeting dedicated to the discussion. There is a provision in the bylaws.
- Questions were asked about the Visit Alexandria vacancy and filling with another tourism professional.
- Question – is the value to the HARC the building/location or the organization? The unifying theme is historic preservation and cultural history.
- Recommendation made:
 - Change the term “churches” to Historic Houses of Worship
 - Broaden the Mortar and Pestle Society to include volunteer organizations that support historic properties

Board of Architectural Review Update: Bill Conkey, provided written update

Samuel Madden

- The Concept Review for the two proposed mixed-use buildings at the north end of North Patrick and North Henry Streets is being heard at a special work session being held in City Hall on September 20, 2022. This will be the fourth meeting to discuss the Concept Review for the project. The Board has provided feedback in previous meetings regarding the height, mass, and scale and will be considering the architectural character at this meeting. After approval of the DSUP associated with the project it will return to the BAR for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- The project is seeking Federal Tax incentives and is therefore going through the Section 106 review process that requires documentation and analysis of the historic nature of the site. This process is currently underway, the applicant has hired an architectural historian to produce the required documentation, a public meeting regarding this process was held on September 19, 2022.

Board Members

- City Council has appointed a new Board member to replace Laurie Ossman who resigned from the Board in July. City Council appointed Andrew Scott for the at-large position on the Board at their September meeting. An additional vacancy from the resignation of John Sprinkle will be filled by City Council at their October meeting.

OHA Report: Gretchen Bulova

- Received \$500,000 Save America’s Treasures Grant from the National Park Service for Freedom House.
- Staff are preparing for the American Alliance of Museums Accreditation Site Visit in December. Three-day site visit will include touring all the museums and historic sites, visiting storage, observing educational programs, and meeting with elected and city officials.
- Alexandria Community Remembrance Project
 - Soil Collection program on September 24th, and a community pilgrimage to Montgomery, AL October 6-10.
 - McCoy descendants plan to attend both events
- Murray-Dick-Fawcett House
 - Glave-Holmes was awarded both the Historic Structures Report and the Master Plan.
 - Phase two of the exterior restoration is nearing 50% completion, with the west façade siding re-installed. The colors are based on the first period of painting of the house.
- New hires and positions
 - Development Position was advertised and has now closed. Applicants will be reviewed.
 - Research historian to research and write markers for the Duke Street coordinator interpretation will begin September 27.
 - The Institute of Museum and Library Services funded intern has been hired to support the digitization of the collections at the Black History Museum and will begin September 27.
- A new exhibit at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, “Alexandria Hospital: Women Mobilize the Community,” is planned to open October 27. The exhibit opening will take place Tuesday, November 1 from 5:30 to 8 p.m.
- Planning to hold the annual Cider Festival on November 19th from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Lloyd House, first time in 3 years.

Public Comment: Four members of the public, representing the Alexandria Assembly, attended to speak to the importance of the dance program at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum and the condition of the building.

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next meeting will take place on October 18, 2022, location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Bulova, OHA